

Integrated marine coastal management for biodiversity conservation in the coasts and beaches of Ecuador

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID
12365
Countries
Ecuador
Project Name
Integrated marine coastal management for biodiversity conservation in the coasts and beaches of Ecuador
Agencies
UNDP
Date received by PM
6/2/2026
Review completed by PM

Program Manager
Sarah Wyatt
Focal Area
Biodiversity
Project Type
MSP

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF) REVIEW SHEET

1. General Project Information / Eligibility

- a) Does the project meet the criteria for eligibility for GEF funding?
- b) Is the General Project Information table correctly populated?

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments
2. Project Summary

Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected results?

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments
3 Indicative Project Overview

- 3.1 a) Is the project objective presented as a concise statement and clear?**
b) Are the components, outcomes and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments
3.2 Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and monitoring and evaluation included within the project components and appropriately funded?

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments
3.3 a) Are the components adequately funded?

b) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?

c) Is the PMC equal to or below 5% of the total GEF grant for FSPs or 10% for MSPs? If the requested PMC is above the caps, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments
6/15/2026

Yes.

6/4/2026

No.

b. Please request the agency to allocate cofinancing to the PMC in a proportional manner. If the PMC remains at 5.0% and cofinancing is \$80,666,107 the corresponding PMC amount should be approximately \$4,033,305 instead of \$1,181,412, which represents 1.46%

Agency's Comments

Agency's Comments 06/15/2026

Comment addressed based on second review sheet. The financing tables have been updated to reflect a proportional allocation of co-financing to Project Management Costs (PMC), consistent with the overall co-financing structure. The PMC-associated co-financing amount has been revised to USD 4,033,305.

4 Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

4.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

a) is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key contextual drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective?

b) Are the key barriers and enablers identified?

Secretariat's Comments

6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

4.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT

a) Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?

b) Does it ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers?

c) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?

d) are the relevant stakeholders and their roles adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments

6/4/2026

Yes, thank you for the revisions.

6/4/2026

No.

d. Please revise the description of Communities and IPLCs. As of now, the description of their role is quite passive as though they will only be implementing community-based marine management and not actually designing it. They will provide knowledge to the project rather than being co-designers of the project. In addition, it is important to be crystal clear on the difference between Indigenous Peoples and community groups and their differentiated rights and roles.

Agency's Comments

Agency's Comments 06/10/2026

Comment addressed. The stakeholder description has been revised to strengthen the role of local communities, community organizations, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio communities, and Indigenous Peoples, where relevant. The revised text clarifies that these stakeholders contribute local and traditional knowledge and participate in the co-design and implementation of marine/coastal management interventions, helping ensure that planning processes and management instruments reflect local priorities, territorial realities and community perspectives. Additional text has also been included in the stakeholder engagement section to clarify that stakeholder mapping and social screening processes will further assess the presence, roles and potential participation of Indigenous Peoples and other local communities in accordance with the Social and Environmental Standards.

5 B. Project Description

5.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

a) Is there a concise theory of change that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements will contribute to the objective, the expected causal pathways, and the key assumptions underlying these?

b) Are the key outputs of each component defined (where possible)?

Secretariat's Comments

6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

5.2 INCREMENTAL/ADDITIONAL COST REASONING

Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12?

Secretariat's Comments

6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

a) Is the institutional setting, including potential executing partners, outlined and a rationale provided?

b) Comments to proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception).

c) is there a description of potential coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area

d) are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?

Secretariat's Comments

6/4/2026

Yes.

6/4/2026

No.

c. This is missing from the PIF entry.

Agency's Comments

Agency's Comments 6/10/2026

Comment addressed. The PIF has been revised to include a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF-financed projects and complementary bilateral and multilateral initiatives. The section explains how the project builds on and scales results from PACA project ? "Towards a joint, integrated and ecosystem-based management of the Great Coastal Marine Ecosystem of the Central American Pacific (PACA)", coordinates with Mangroves for Climate and BIOFIN, and leverages knowledge exchange and technical collaboration with relevant regional initiatives. The revision clarifies complementarities, avoids duplication of efforts and demonstrates how the project will generate additional value through coordinated implementation and shared learning.

5.4 a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)?

b) Are the project's indicative targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators)/adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?

Secretariat's Comments

6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

5.5 NGI Only: Is there a justification of financial structure and use of financial instrument with concessionality levels?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

5.6 RISKS

a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category?

b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?

c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately screened and rated at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat's Comments

6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

5.7 Qualitative assessment

a) Does the project intend to be well integrated, durable, and transformative?

b) Is there potential for innovation and scaling-up?

c) Will the project contribute to an improved alignment of national policies (policy coherence)?

Secretariat's Comments

6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

6 C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies and Country/Regional Priorities

6.1 Is the project adequately aligned with focal area and integrated program strategies and objectives, and/or adaptation priorities?

Secretariat's Comments

6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

6.2 Is the project alignment/coherent with country and regional priorities, policies, strategies and plans (including those related to the MEAs and to relevant sectors)

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e. BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Is the Policy Requirements section completed?

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

7.2 Is a list of stakeholders consulted during PIF development, including dates of these consultations, provided?

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

8.1 Is the proposed GEF financing (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):

STAR allocation?

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments
Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments
LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments
SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments
SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments
Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

8.2 Is the PPG requested within the allowable cap (per size of project)? If requested, has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated?

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

8.3 Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Annex B: Endorsements

8.4 Has the project been endorsed by the country? (ies) GEF OFP and has the OFP at the time of PIF submission name and position been checked against the GEF database?

Secretariat's Comments
6/15/2026

Yes.

6/4/2026

No. The footnote is missing.

Agency's Comments

Agency's Comments 6/10/2026

Comment addressed. The letter of endorsement was updated accordingly.

Are the OFP endorsement letters uploaded to the GEF Portal (compiled as a single document, if applicable)?

Secretariat's Comments
N/A

Agency's Comments

Do the letters follow the correct format and are the endorsed amounts consistent with the amounts included in the Portal?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

8.5 For NCI projects (which may not require LoEs), has the Agency informed the OFP(s) of the project to be submitted?

Secretariat's CommentsN/A

Agency's Comments

Annex C: Project Location

8.6 Is there preliminary georeferenced information and a map of the project's intended location?

Secretariat's Comments

6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Annex D: Safeguards Screen and Rating

8.7 If there are safeguard screening documents or other ESS documents prepared, have these been uploaded to the GEF Portal?

Secretariat's Comments

6/4/2026

Yes.

6/4/2026

No, please address the issues below. Some of these can be addressed during PPG, but ensuring FPIC and sufficient involvement for co-design is important during PPG as well.

1. According to several sources, all five coastal provinces (Esmeraldas, Manabi, Santa Elena, Guayas, and El Oro) are home to several clearly recognized Indigenous Peoples, Chachi, Epera, Aw?, and Ts?chila, and the reviving Wancavilca (Huancavilca) identity in Guayas and Santa Elena. Particularly, in the southern part of Manabi, there are Indigenous Peoples living in the Machalilla National Park, <https://machalillaturismo.com/museo-arqueologico-de-agua-blanca/>. In addition, the CEO Approval document also states that *?to create biodiversity-friendly economic*

opportunities for ancestral (indigenous) peoples and local communities (IPLCs).? Vulnerable groups (women, youth, Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, small-scale fishers) may be excluded from participation, benefit or access to financing and training.? Please clarify how the project consults with Indigenous Peoples in the project areas to develop project design and how the project integrates results of the consultations into the project concept particularly Component 1 and 2. Examples of the references of Indigenous Peoples in the areas include following:

1. Daniel Bauer. (2011) "BECOMING MANTA: ARCHAEOLOGY, PLACE, AND MEANINGS OF INDIGENITY?", *Ethnology*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (Fall 2011), pp. 319-331 (13 pages) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23882743?seq=1>
 2. Restrepo, E.J., & Rodríguez, M.J.F.L. (2022). "Deforestation, Institutions, and Property Rights: Evidence from Land Titling to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Ecuador."
 3. Colfer, C.J.P., et al. (2017). "Mangroves, People and Cockles: Impacts of the Shrimp-Farming Industry on Mangrove Communities in Esmeraldas Province, Ecuador." In *Environment and Livelihoods in Tropical Coastal Zones*, pp. 140-153. Wallingford: CABI Publishing.
 4. Rahier, J.M. (2003). "The Erased Chapter of Ecuador's History: The Afro-Esmeraldians and the Rise of the Black Pacific." In *Blacks and Blackness in the African Diaspora*, ed. J. Rahier. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
 5. Bernabé Jara, W.A., & León Valle, B. (2023). "Identidad cultural y la resignificación de la cultura en la provincia de Santa Elena." *593 Digital Publisher CEIT*, 8(6).
2. Please revise an Environmental and Social Safeguard Screening document, ESMF, stakeholder engagement plan and the environmental and social section of the Key risk table based on relevant information about potential risk related to Indigenous Peoples.
 3. Please ensure the project obtained free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) from Indigenous Peoples about project design before CEO Approval and throughout project implementation and monitoring.
 4. Please also clarify how the project consults with vulnerable groups in the project areas to identify priority and needs of project concept and how the project integrates results of the consultations into the project concept particularly Component 1 and 2.
 5. Please consider Indigenous Peoples and local communities not only as beneficiaries, but also as project partners throughout the project implementation, especially on Component 1 and 2.
 6. Please also consider respecting Indigenous Peoples governance and local knowledge and supporting Indigenous Peoples capacity building as a part of the project.
 7. Please consider incorporating monitoring indicators related to integration of traditional and local governance, traditional and local knowledge and capacity building for Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the project.

Agency's Comments

Agency's Comments 6/10/2026

Comment partially addressed at the PIF stage and will be further developed during project preparation. Based on available demographic and stakeholder information, project intervention areas are primarily characterized by local coastal communities, artisanal fishers, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio populations. During the stakeholder consultations undertaken during project identification through participatory consultation spaces covering the five coastal provinces, no organizations or representatives self-identifying as Indigenous Peoples or Indigenous governance structures were identified among participants. Participants were primarily drawn from local coastal communities, artisanal fishers, Afro-Ecuadorian and

Montubio populations, local governments, civil society organizations, academia and productive sector stakeholders. The project nevertheless recognizes that Indigenous Peoples may be present or maintain cultural and historical links in some coastal territories and will further assess their presence, governance structures, territorial rights and potential interaction with project activities through stakeholder mapping and social screening processes consistent with GEF and UNDP Social and Environmental Standards.

The PIF has been revised to strengthen the role of local communities, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio communities, and Indigenous Peoples where relevant, recognizing them as active contributors to the co-design and implementation of marine?coastal management interventions rather than solely beneficiaries. The stakeholder description has also been revised to clarify their role in contributing local and traditional knowledge and helping ensure that planning processes and management instruments reflect local priorities, territorial realities and community perspectives. In addition, demographic information available for the prioritized municipalities did not identify the presence of Indigenous Peoples populations, although this will be further verified during project preparation through stakeholder mapping and social screening processes. Stakeholder consultation processes undertaken during project preparation informed project priorities, governance arrangements, planning instruments and financing approaches, and continued engagement will be undertaken during project design and implementation.

Potential risks and opportunities associated with Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other vulnerable groups will be further assessed and reflected, as appropriate, in the relevant safeguard and stakeholder engagement instruments prepared during project preparation. Specific requirements related to stakeholder engagement, differentiated participation, Indigenous Peoples assessment, FPIC (where applicable), safeguard instruments, capacity-building measures and monitoring frameworks will be further assessed and detailed during project preparation, consistent with GEF and UNDP SES requirements and applicable national legislation.

Annex E: Rio Markers

8.8 Are the Rio Markers for CCM, CCA, BD and LD correctly selected, if applicable?

Secretariat's Comments
6/4/2026

Yes.

Agency's Comments

Annex F: Taxonomy Worksheet

8.9 Is the project properly tagged with the appropriate keywords?

Secretariat's Comments

6/15/2026

Yes. Thank you for the revision.

6/4/2026

No, this response is confusing given the many mentions of Indigenous Peoples and working with them. While projects shouldn't tag every vaguely relevant term, Indigenous Peoples are prominent in this project.

6/4/2026

No. Please tag Indigenous Peoples if that is appropriate.

Agency's Comments

Agency's Comments 6/10/2026

The project has been reviewed against the Indigenous Peoples taxonomy category. Based on the current project design, interventions are focused primarily on municipal coastal management jurisdictions and on local coastal communities, artisanal fishers, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio populations. While Indigenous Peoples may be present or maintain historical and cultural links in some coastal territories, their presence, territorial rights and potential interaction with project-supported activities will be further assessed during project preparation through stakeholder mapping and social screening processes.

The Indigenous Peoples taxonomy tag will be reviewed and updated, if warranted, based on the results of these assessments and the final safeguards screening undertaken during project preparation.

Agency's Comments 06/15/2026

Comment addressed based on second review sheet. The Indigenous Peoples taxonomy tag has been added to reflect the potential relevance of Indigenous Peoples in some coastal territories and the project's commitment to further assess their presence and potential interaction with project activities during project preparation.

Annex G: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.10 Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. Is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat's Comments N/A

Agency's Comments

9 GEFSEC Decision

9.1 Is the PIF and PPG (if requested) recommended for technical clearance?

Secretariat's Comments

6/15/2026

Yes. Thank you for the quick response.

6/11/2026

Not at this time, with two small issues remaining.

6/4/2026

Not at this time. Noting the wider GEF Secretariat review blackout, this is a partial review to address issues and resubmit for a full review.

Agency's Comments

Agency's Comments 6/10/2026

Noted. The Agency has addressed the comments provided in this partial review and revised the PIF accordingly. The updated PIF is resubmitted for further review and technical clearance.

Agency's Comments 06/15/2026

Noted. The agency has addressed in the revised PIF, the PMC CoFinancing distribution and Indigenous People's tagging comments based on the second review sheet received.

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency at the time of CEO Endorsement/Approval

Secretariat's Comments

6/4/2026

Update and revision of plans - During PPG, please ensure that the plans include how updates and revisions to the plans will happen and which institutions are responsible for doing them.

Agency's Comments

Agency's Comments 6/10/2026

Comment noted. During project preparation, the SEP, ESMF and other relevant safeguard and management instruments will include provisions describing how updates and revisions will be undertaken over time, including the institutions and stakeholders responsible for implementation, monitoring and periodic review.

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review		6/10/2026
Additional Review (as necessary)		6/15/2026

PIF Review

Agency Response

Additional Review (as necessary)

Additional Review (as necessary)

Additional Review (as necessary)